

U.N. Gets Mexican Plan To End Dues Impasse

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UNITED NATIONS, N.Y.—Mexico has offered the Soviet Union a way to escape from pressure to pay its United Nations dues. It has proposed that all payments for the U.N.'s Congo and Mideast peace armies—past and future—be considered "voluntary contributions."

The proposal, made here yesterday, sounded to U.N. ears like half of a deal to end the organization's long standing financial crisis. The other half would be a "voluntary" Soviet payment.

Russia has said it would make a voluntary contribution, but would never pay a cent under pressure.

The net effect of such a deal would be to write off a part of Russia's past debt. No one thinks the Soviet "contribution" would be big enough to cover it all.

Assessments Still Binding

However, the U.N.'s legal power to make binding assessments in the future would remain on the books. And it could still be exercised by the veto-free General Assembly, not the security council as Russia has demanded.

United States reaction to the plan was distinctly cool.

It remains official American policy to insist that Russia pay up, or lose its vote.

However, many signs suggest that the United States does not have the votes to win this fight. Some observers believe the Mexican plan may prove, in the end, to be the best settlement available to Washington.

"The United States would lose on the past, and win on the future," one delegate commented. "Russia would get away with

welshing—but the U.N.'s peace-keeping power would be intact."

Other observers thought this might be somewhat too optimistic an interpretation, since a precedent for voluntary financing would have been set which would make compulsory financing difficult to invoke in the future.

What Mexican delegate Francisco Cuevas Cancino proposed was that all formal debt to the U.N. for the Congo and Mideast armies be erased. Some 13 countries owe over \$100 million.

An appeal would be made to all U.N. member states—but primarily to the present debtors—to contribute to a "save-the-U.N." fund.

Way Out of Article 19

All previous payments to the two peace forces would be reclassified as "voluntary contributions." They have been obligatory assessments.

Since the armies would have been paid for "voluntarily," under the Mexican plan, no country would be legally in the U.N.'s debt, and none would come under the sanction of Article 19 of the U.N. charter, which specifies that debtors two years in arrears lose their General Assembly vote.

All this coincides with the Soviet position, frequently restated. Mexico also proposed, however, that the veto-free Assembly reassert its power of the purse—thus rebuffing Soviet efforts to establish a "financial veto" by giving assessment power to the Security Council.